

# Marpa

Mid Anglia Rail Passengers' Association  
[www.marpa.org.uk](http://www.marpa.org.uk)

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## Autumn 2013 Newsletter

It has been fairly quiet in the MARPA area lines recently. We are having quite a few bus replacements on weekend journeys, but hopefully the repaired infrastructure will be reliable and we can't complain about investment.

I hope that Network Rail have the leaf fall season under control – and just a reminder that if your mid-Anglia journey connects with a mainline service be aware that in the leaf fall season the timetables change by a couple of minutes to allow more time.

### AGM

The MARPA AGM was held on Saturday 20th April 2013 in Bury. It was well attended and it opened with Peter Wakefield speaking to the meeting regarding the recent death of committee member Clara Zilahi. After this short talk about Clara's life the meeting stood in a minute's silence.

Phil Smart then gave a thought provoking talk entitled "Expanding the Network ".... The East Anglian network in particular. He noted that our previous campaigns had been to stop closures but now we were having to turn our attention to expansion of the network. He illustrated why we need to do the latter through a series of slides...decline in road traffic; rail growth at the same time and both having no seeming hard link to economic activity. Car ownership has reached saturation and the removal of company car as a tax "perk" plus road fuel and insurance costs have all played a part in this. Young people are not applying for driving licenses at the previous rate with now only 30% of 20year olds holding one....several reasons for this include the continued move to urbanised living especially for the young, a greater appreciation of "time" in that they can eat/drink, phone and text on board a train.

Phil then outlined recent local improvements in rail travel but emphasised that they must not just happen in London. Although there is no East Anglian over-arching transport authority as there is in London, local politicians have come together to make the railway better....the best example of that is the production of the "East Anglian Railway Prospectus." This is not just about people as there has been a 14% increase in rail freight that includes 85% more containers being moved. Phil pointed out that Ipswich is at the centre of all this...where the 1.4km long Ipswich freight North to East chord is being constructed...IBC had safeguarded its route since the 1990s after the Ipswich Northern bypass had been shelved....It has been in the local plan since 2001. He noted that the GM of Felixstowe port described lorries as "anarchy"; ships are bigger by 20%, rail getting more efficient...so the scene was set for a more environmentally benign solution to some of the road capacity problems...the A14 in particular could save 750,000 lorry movements pa by 2030.

He then outlined what he felt should be our future ambitions for Network Rail's Control Period 5, including Ely North Junction; Soham; Bow Junction & Crossrail in London; Electrification of Ipswich to Felixstowe; Hourly service Ipswich to Peterborough though he did pose the question

whether the current service could go hourly using the current stock as far as Ely until stock is available.

More ambitious aspirations included line speeds to 100 mph; double tracking Newmarket to Cambridge to enable a half hourly service...a stopping and a semi fast service.

Ann Henderson (MARPA's membership officer and treasurer) outlined the current financial and membership situation. We are delighted to have 46 members

## **BURY STATION**

On a recent journey back from Peterborough I had to change at Bury. I think the 'wideway' has deteriorated in visual amenity - OK some of the bushes are dead, no doubt sprayed earlier in the year, but the weeds and dead and decaying vegetation give a poor impression, which invites the traveller's eye to look further – and see the dead and decaying buildings. I'm delighted that Bury has a café and a waiting room and toilets in 'normal hours', but outside of these it is no advertisement for what is a thriving town.

## **NEW ANGLIA TACKLES TRANSPORT SECRETARY ON RAIL ISSUES**

On 20 August some of the board members of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership including Mark Pendlington and Mark Goodall joined business leaders and local MPs Chloe Smith, Priti Patel and Ben Gummer at a meeting with Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin. The aim of the meeting was to highlight the fact that improvements to rail in the region would transform the economy of East Anglia and would cost little more than 1% of the estimated cost of the controversial HS2 route.

Mr McLoughlin was clear that he would be unable to make promises at the meeting, but carried with him a copy of the East Anglia Rail Prospectus, which he referred to throughout.

Topics discussed included reliability, lack of WiFi and power points on services and poor journey times.

Mark Pendlington focused on the benefits to be gained from investment in rail, worth over £26 billion to the New Anglia Economy alone. He said: "The significance of our growth sectors to recovery, plus our plans for 65,000 jobs and 10,000 new businesses by 2025, all depend on modern effective rail links. "I also highlighted the historic underinvestment in rail in the East compared with other regions. The East has the highest number of people in the UK using rail to get to work, however our rolling stock is among the oldest in the UK."

## **FROM PASSENGER VOICE – The newsletter of Passenger Focus**

### **Train fares in England set to rise by 4.1 per cent**

Last week passengers found out that train fares are set to go up by around four per cent next year.

The Government announced that Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation in July was 3.1 per cent. This means that in January regulated train fares in England will rise by an average of 4.1 per cent.

In response to this news David Sidebottom, Passenger Focus director, said: "Passengers will shrug wearily at the news that regulated fares in England are set to rise next January by an average of 4.1%. Now passengers are the main funders of the railway it is crucial that, in return for this rise, more trains arrive on time, investment in future improvements continues and the basic promises the industry make are delivered.

“It is clearly in passengers’ interests that some fares are regulated. However, the way that train companies are allowed so much flexibility to set fares on individual routes is unfair. With regulated fares going up by RPI plus one per cent some passengers could still be facing steep rises on their route. There is a need for some flexibility but not this much. Train companies cannot explain to an individual passenger why their fare has gone up by a certain amount. That is not transparent or fair.”

## Bus punctuality project (also from Passenger Voice)

Bus passenger satisfaction with punctuality varies widely, from 57 to 83 per cent across England. We also know that improving punctuality is bus passengers’ top priority for improvement.

However it can be difficult to know how well bus services are performing (outside of London), making it difficult to compare perception with reality like we do for rail.

We have been working with industry, the regulator (Traffic Commissioners) and local authorities to have a practical discussion about how to share information and take action on poorly-performing routes.

The Bus Punctuality Project set out to understand what delays buses and how to address these causes, to understand issues around collecting and wider sharing of data and to achieve punctuality improvements in case study areas.

We studied more than a dozen routes, from Newcastle in the north east to Exeter in the south-west, working with bus companies and local authorities in Cambridgeshire, Derby, Devon and Hertfordshire and in all six Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) areas.

## CLARA ZILHAI

You will be aware from the last newsletter that Clara had died. However we are aware that the Rail User Groups Awards intend to name a RUG Award after her. So there will be a Clara Zilahi award to mark their appreciation for her special contribution to the cause of railway development

## SMART TICKETING

Rail passengers have a clear appetite for smart ticketing, particularly if it means tickets are easier and cheaper to buy. However, they were keen to understand how it would work in practice. *Smart ticketing – what passengers want* is the first in a series of reports exploring passengers’ needs and attitudes to smart ticketing.

Passengers expect any smart ticketing scheme to provide:

- **value for money** – some kind of cost saving, either via cheaper fares or new cost-effective tickets and products
- **convenience** – need to be a convenient option that is easy to use
- **simplicity** – especially for those unfamiliar with smart technology/ticketing

- **security** – passengers need to be confident that their money and personal data is secure
- **flexibility** – want to be able to choose and purchase new products and tickets that offered flexible travel options
- **tailoring** – need to provide passengers with the ability to choose how they manage their account
- **leading edge** – used as an opportunity to lead the way in ticketing technology rather than replicate existing systems.

### **Ramble to Elmswell**

Roger Wolfe invites us all to join him on a ramble from Thurston to Elmswell on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October, leaving Thurston at about 10.50 after the arrival of the 10.20 train from Ipswich. More details from Roger on [rdandaswolfe.2@btinternet.com](mailto:rdandaswolfe.2@btinternet.com)

### **Committee Members**

We desperately need new committee members –all that is needed is a willingness to attend a meeting every other month, close to a mid-anglia line station. Do come along – even for a ‘trial’ meeting. If you think you might be interested please contact [secretary@marpa.org.uk](mailto:secretary@marpa.org.uk) to find the date and time and location of the next meeting.

### **Cancelled Trains**

We would be interested in a quick e-mail to [secretary@marpa.org.uk](mailto:secretary@marpa.org.uk) giving details of any cancelled trains members might have been inconvenienced by. We are just trying to get a feel of how many trains are cancelled and to see if any patterns emerge.

### **Marpa Membership**

The membership of Marpa is from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> July each year. So this means all membership subscriptions are now due! Currently Marpa does not have the IT capability to send reminders to each and every member when the subscriptions are due other than to issue reminders in this Newsletter. Your membership is valued by us and the subscription is vital if we are to continue to campaign in support of issues that members feel strongly about in relation to our local rail routes etc.

Annual Membership Subscription Rates:

Adult - £5.00

Family/Joint - £6.00

Concession - £4.00

*(Student / Senior / Unwaged / Disabled)*

Please renew your 2013/ 2014 subscription by getting in touch with our Membership Secretary (Ann Henderson 01359 230139). Her address is:-

MARPA (Membership)

c/o 48 High Street,

Ixworth,

Bury St Edmunds,

IP31 2HJ

Please make your cheque payable to ‘Mid Anglia Rail Passengers Association’.

### **WEB SITE REMINDER**

A further reminder to visit/use our website [www.marpa.org.uk](http://www.marpa.org.uk)